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OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

26 August 1981

After more than six years of unsuccessfully attempting to obtain the Greek Government's permission to establish a permanent FBIS bureau in Athens, FBIS closed its temporary unit there in January 1981 and transferred its Greek radio and newspaper coverage to Nicosia Bureau. (S)

It first seemed that the transfer of coverage to Nicosia might result in the loss of some Athens radio coverage, but Nicosia Bureau negotiated a contract with the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CYTA) for the use of their extensive antenna fields to provide better reception of Athens radio. At present the bureau's communications with the CYTA site in Kili consists of a single telephone line. Coverage is thus limited to the Athens Domestic Service as relayed by FM transmitters at Rhodes, Khania, Traklion or Thira, and consequently reception is variable, affected by propagation and weather conditions. Between the broadcasts monitored at the bureau and those monitored from the limited facilities at Kili, the bureau can now cover approximately 75 percent of Athens Domestic Service programs and 55 percent of Athens Armed Forces Radio coverage previously handled by Athens. (S)

In case of a crisis, the bureau should be able to monitor newscasts during much of the broadcast day from one Athens source or another. The bureau could not maintain constant watch on ongoing events, but except in periods of very bad weather the current reception allows the bureau some monitorable coverage of one or the other Athens transmitters during each hour of the broadcast day. (S)

Also, Nicosia Bureau has made an arrangement with ~~USA~~ Athens whereby, in the event of a crisis, FBIS radio receivers in the ~~USA~~ office will be

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used to tune in Athens radio broadcasts. These broadcasts will be sent via international telephone to Nicosia, assuming that telephone lines will be available. (S)

Microwave equipment to upgrade communications with the Kili site has been ordered and should arrive in Cyprus by March 1982. When this equipment is in operation the bureau believes it will be able to reliably monitor Athens with at least fair reception throughout the broadcast day at all times of the year. (S)

The transfer of Greek coverage to Nicosia Bureau ~~also~~ results in a ^{slight} delay in the receipt of Athens newspapers, but these papers are still received in time to be processed on the day of publication. In fact, the

priority requests for press coverage. (S)

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The closure of Athens Unit has saved FBIS the annual cost of running the unit--\$384,000 budgeted for 1981. The only expense Nicosia Bureau incurred in assuming Greek coverage was \$30,000 a year for the CYTA contract and \$52,500 a year in salaries for the two Greek monitors transferred from Athens. (S)

An added benefit of the transfer was that the new remote monitoring arrangement with CYTA has also allowed FBIS to provide full coverage of the Libyan radio in Tripoli, which was previously inaudible in the morning. The importance of this capability was illustrated by FBIS' ability to provide full coverage of the recent ~~F-14~~ incident. (S)

(air clash with Libyan fighters.

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